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ABSTRACT

This document describes the development, implementation, and evaluation of a 10-week parent effectiveness training program to improve black elementary school student attitudes and participation in extracurricular activities by improving the attitudes of their parents towards school. The program was developed in consultation with teachers and counselors and includes the following goals: (1) improve parent attitudes through time management; (2) improve the parent-child relationship through interpersonal communication; (3) improve parent discipline strategies; (4) improve parents' ability to serve as role models and encourage their children to participate in extracurricular activities through role playing; (5) improve parents' ability to interpret test scores, school reports, and homework; (6) improve parent participation in the Parent Teacher Association; (7) improve parents' ability to communicate with school personnel; and (8) improve the parent-school relationship by giving parents the opportunity to meet school personnel. Pre- and postsurveys and pre- and postinterviews administered to the 22 participants indicated improvements in parent attitudes and their perceptions of their children's attitudes. Areas for further research are suggested. Statistical data are presented in four tables. The following materials are appended: (1) four tables of statistical data comparing black and white discipline and extracurricular activity participation; (2) copies of the survey and interview questionnaires; (3) four graphs illustrating responses to the pre- and post-surveys and the pre- and post-interviews; (4) two recruitment posters; and (5) a 12-item bibliography. (FMW)

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A PROGRAM TO MODIFY A BLACK COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY'S ROLE IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

by

Christine Watkins

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

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Abstract

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The high percentage of Black students not participating in extracurricular activities at an elementary school was addressed by the implementation of a program to modify a community's perception of the community's role in school activities. The program was designed to increase involvement of Black parents in their children's educational and social development through effective parenting classes. Practicum goals were to improve the negative attitudes of the Black students, to increase the number of Black students participating in extracurricular activities, and to improve the students' self-esteem. Parent surveys and interviews revealed that parents were interested in modifying their role in school activities, but felt isolated, intimidated, or did not recognize the need for their participation. The effective parenting program that was implemented trained parents to modify their role in school activities. Practicum evaluation data indicated outcomes were positive. Parents became more aware of their role in school activities. Due to time constraints, possible academic and social effects of the project were not investigated fully. However, the author suggests students receiving increased attention from parents may receive also long range social and academic benefits. Further study is needed. Appendices include graphic analysis of corporal punishment and suspension data, students' involvement in activities, pre- and post-surveys, pre- and post-interviews, and sample poster information.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed:

Chris Watkins

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The elementary school chosen for this study was located in a small community within one of the fastest growing sections in the southeast. Over the last five years, the surrounding area has been greatly affected by the opening of several tourist attractions and a large number of motels and recreational facilities. In addition, new shopping centers, businesses, and housing complexes have been built in the immediate area.

The school consisted of grades kindergarten through fifth. The composition of the school was predominately suburban. The ethnic composition of the community was 87 percent White, middle-class families, and 13 percent minority families. The school's student population was 79 percent White, 13 percent Black, two percent Asian-American, four percent Spanish-surnamed, and one percent Indian. Approximately two percent of the students received lunch at a reduced rate, and 17 percent received free lunch. Sixty-three percent of the students were

transported to school by bus, five percent transported by day care vehicles, 19 percent transported by car, and 13 percent walked to school. The school was designed for 694 students; however, the current student population was 944 and more students were expected to enroll in the near future. Thirteen portable classrooms were added to accommodate increased student enrollment.

The staff was composed of: a principal, assistant principal, secretary, attendance clerk, office assistant, guidance counselor, counselor assistant, ten instructional assistants, and six full-time custodians. There were seven kindergarten, seven first grade, six second grade, seven third grade, five fourth grade, and five fifth grade teachers. The staff was supported by: an art teacher, music teacher, three physical education teachers, media specialist, full-time computer assistant, two teachers for learning disabled students, teacher for the visually impaired students, part-time speech teacher, full-time teacher for gifted students, and a Primary Education Program (PREP) specialist with a full-time instructional assistant. Ten percent of the school's faculty were Black; 90 percent were White. All teachers

had at least a bachelor's degree; 30 percent of the instructional assistants have attended at least two years of college. The teacher-pupil ratio was 1:25 in the primary grades; 1:28 in the intermediate grades.

The school was strongly supported by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTA) and volunteer helpers. A good rapport existed between the school and community. The custodial staff maintained the beauty and safety of the school, assisting in the learning process. Given a well-planned school, curriculum and support team, there were concerns related to student progress in other areas. During the practicum process, the writer served as a third grade teacher responsible not only for teaching the educational program of the students in the writer's class, but also, for serving as a role model for all children in the community. Therefore, the writer would be able to have some control and influence over most problems related to instruction and school affairs. To select a problem for study, the writer reviewed the school's annual and second quarterly reports. The writer also interviewed the school principal. (See Appendices A:46 and B:47.)

The writer observed less than one percent of the Black students at an elementary school participated in extracurricular activities. Furthermore, the school's annual report indicated a high number of instances of corporal punishment and out-of-school suspensions of the Black students. The writer desired to find out if the problem existed at other schools. The writer sought information from three neighboring schools concerning the percentage of Black students involved in extra curricular activities (see Appendix C:48). As a result, School A reported 22 percent of the Black students participated. Meanwhile, School B reported 21 percent, and School C reported one percent participation. Based on these findings, it appeared there should be a higher percentage of Black students at the writer's school participating in the extracurricular activities.

According to the schools' administrators, little was known about how members of a Black community viewed the community's roles in activities in schools of today; consequently, the writer felt it would be an important undertaking to study a Black community's perception of the community's role in activities of a public school.

The writer observed less than one percent of the Black students at an elementary school participated in extra-curricular activities. Also, based on the school's annual report, there was a high number of instances of corporal punishment and out-of-school suspensions of the Black students (see Appendix A:46).

According to the second quarterly report of the school, there were five extracurricular activities offered (as noted in Appendix B:47). One such activity, Student Patrol membership, consisted of eight White students, three minority students with zero percent Black. Another, the chorus, consisted of 70 Whites, two minority students with .03 percent Black. The student council consisted of 40 White students, one minority student and .025 percent Black. In addition, the math superstar activity consisted of 128 students, 36 minority students with .03 percent Black. Lastly, the Academic All Stars consisted of 40 White students, four minority students with .025 percent Black.

Since the problem involves studying a Black community's perception of the community's role and factors which have most influenced the role, the researcher was

concerned if the lack of Black students' involvement was an isolated problem compared to other schools. Therefore the writer sought information from three neighboring schools concerning the percentage of Black students involved in extracurricular activities (see Appendix C:48).

As a result, School A reported 22 percent of the Black students participated. Meanwhile, School B reported 21 percent, and School C reported one percent participation. Based on these findings, it appeared there should be a higher percentage of Black students at the writer's school participating in the extracurricular activities.

According to the school's guidance counselor, lack of participating in extracurricular activities carried over into other areas, both academic and nonacademic. It was evident there was a need to implement additional ways to help Black students develop positive attitudes and self-images. The writer had observed the Black students' weak sense of affiliation. None out of 15 Black students surveyed by the writer reported feelings of isolation, had difficulties initiating and maintaining friendships,

and were easily influenced by others. Therefore, the Black students needed to feel they were as much a part of the school as other students.

The writer was concerned not only with studying the Black community's perception of its role in public school activities but also factors that influenced the lack of student involvement. First of all, the lack of extracurricular involvement could be attributed to the Black students' environments. The area in which the students lived, according to the police department, was a high crime area, infested with drug activities and an alarming unemployment rate. For instance, last year, as stated by a local newspaper in June 1989, an undercover policeman was shot and killed during an investigation (to curtail the sale of crack cocaine) in the area. Therefore, the Black students were not exposed to positive role models.

Secondly, as discussed by the tenant counselor of the county's Housing Authority, 65 percent of the students came from single parent families unable to help the students with needed school work. Lastly, parents did not want to get involved with the school because of limited educational backgrounds or past experiences.

Nevertheless, children are basically more alike than different, and at least 20 percent of the Black students could be involved in the activities offered at the school, and academic achievement could be higher.

For the purpose of this study, the writer used 128 Black students having negative attitudes and low self-concepts, according to the writer's observation and conferring with other teachers. The data of this study was obtained only from Black students and their parents. Generalizations of the findings were confined to one urban elementary school, although results gained could be an exemplary plan for other school programs. The writer believed 20 percent of the Black students should have been participating in extracurricular activities, therefore the study only measured participation in extracurricular activities, although the academics could also be affected.

Over a ten-week period, effective parenting classes increased 128 Black students' involvement in extracurricular activities by 20 percent. Evidence of the finding(s) were the results of pre- and post-surveys (Appendix D:49-50) and pre-interviews (Appendix E:51).

The students also showed an improvement in attitudes and achievements as measured by post-interviews (Appendix E:52).

The following were objectives and goals of the program:

1. Twenty percent of the Black students' parents participating in effective parenting classes will demonstrate a more positive attitude toward school as evidenced by the writer's observation of the students' interactions at school, and post-interviews (Appendix E:52).
2. Twenty percent of the Black students will develop an interest for extracurricular activities after their parents have successfully participated and completed the effective parenting classes as evidenced by post-interviews (Appendix E:52).
3. Twenty percent of the Black students with parents participating in effective parenting classes will show an improvement in self-esteem

and academic achievements as evidenced by post-interviews (Appendix E:52).

Since the target group was governed by the Housing Authority of the county, the writer contacted the agency concerning the availability of the community room and procedures to obtain it for a program of effective parenting classes. If the community room was not available, the writer would have sought out parents in the target area willing to allow the classes to be conducted in their homes.

The writer set up a program for ten weeks. Each class or session was held for at least one hour. The program helped the parents develop essential skills to support their children through the teaching-learning process. They served as role models for their children as they participated in the sessions. They gained mutual support from each other as they strived to better understand the challenges their children faced in school.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

A review of the related literature revealed that the contrast between a child's experiences at home and experiences in school greatly affect the child's social development and academic achievement. Based on the literature, many factors can contribute to the lack of parental involvement. A number of suggestions were given to bridge the gap between home and school. However, before any program can be developed and implemented, some concerns must be addressed.

Bray (1987) noted that in terms of education, family, health and income, Black children in America are more deprived than Whites. Cole (1983) stated poor minority children are under-educated in disproportionate numbers across the country. He further said children may lag academically behind the national average by as much as two years. Holman (1985) agreed the failure to educate these children makes it difficult to rectify economic and social inequities.

Berlinder and Casanova (1985) recognized all the money and effort expended for educational reform will have only limited benefits, particularly for poor minority students as long as the underlying developmental and social issues remained unaddressed. Yet, many researchers agree some teachers and administrators are not trained to organize and manage schools in ways that support the overall development of Black students. Nor, they found, does training enable educators to analyze the social misalignment problems of students outside the mainstream (Bray 1987, Cole 1983 and Henderson 1987).

Cole (1983) revealed when a child's development meshes with mainstream values encountered at school, the child will be prepared to achieve at the level of his or her ability. In addition, the meshing of home and school fosters further development when a student's social skills are considered appropriate by the teacher, eliciting positive reactions. A bond develops between the student and the teacher supporting the overall development of the child (Holman, 1985).

Holman (1985) stated educators' understanding of children is based on the fact that a child develops a

strong emotional bond to competent caretakers (usually parents), enabling them to help the child develop. Development in social, psychological, emotional, moral, linguistic, and cognitive areas is critical to future academic learning (Cole, 1983; Holman, 1985). Holman (1985) said the attitudes, values, and behavior of the family and the social network of the family strongly affects such development.

Nonetheless, a student from a poor, marginal family, in contrast, is likely to enter school without adequate preparation (Holman, 1985). Holman (1985) found the student may arrive without having learned such social skills as negotiation and compromise. For example, in some families a child who does not fight back may be punished. And yet, the same behavior may cause the student to be in trouble at school.

According to Sleeter and Grant (1988), low-income parents face many barriers to active involvement in their children's schools. Those barriers include work schedules, feelings of intimidation by educators, and daily survival problems. Cole (1983) agreed and found lack of parental involvement is also attributed to the parents'

feeling unwelcome, lacking the skills and information to make an impact on the school system. Therefore, he continued, many Black parents become disenchanted and withdraw from the educational process.

Other researchers also attribute reasons why Black parents do not get involved in their children's school activities are related to home atmosphere. Tulley (1988) stated many parents who remember having had negative experiences with their own school may have some problems with authority or feel they will not understand the teacher. Sometime, he continued, the parents are unclear about expectations of them in a classroom.

One study cited by Sleeter and Grant (1988) on families of high- and low-achieving Black students from low income families found parents who believed they had some control over their own and their children's lives acted in ways supporting the work of the school and promoted higher achievement of their children. On the other hand, the study found parents who believed they lacked control behaved differently (Grant and Sleeter 1988).

Cole (1983) disclosed poor Black students are labeled "bad," unmotivated, or stupid. Staff employees punished the children and held low expectations for them, often blaming the students, their parents, and their communities for the problems. Parents, for their part, take the problems as a personal failure. They lose hope, confidence, and become less supportive of the school. Some parents, ashamed of their speech, dress, or inability to hold jobs, become defensive and hostile, avoiding contact with the school staff (Tulley, 1988). The result, as set forth by Cole (1983), is a high degree of mutual distrust between home and school.

According to the research, everyone benefits when parents are involved in school. One such writer, Henderson (1986), asserted parental involvement improved student achievement. Programs, she contended, designed with strong parent involvement produced students who performed better than otherwise identical programs not involving parents. He claimed even a low level of participation could have a powerful statistical effect.

Becker (1984) offered documented research on school-based programs in which low-income parents have been

trained to work with their children. As a result, there was remarkable improvement. Important effects of parent involvement on the general educational process were found (Grant and Sleeter, 1988).

Other writers proposed ways to get parents involved in school activities. For instance, Henderson, Marbuger and Ooms (1986) offered seven basic principles that are important to an effective parent-school relationship. They included examples from schools that actually used the principles.

In addition, The Instructor (1986) cited conclusions that researchers had found on parent participation in schools and student achievement. A number of successful strategies used in the United States today were rendered. For example, a basic skills program for parents was printed in three different languages. The program instructed parents in ways they could help foster their children's skills. The result: teachers, parents, and students worked together regardless of what language they spoke.

Lastly, the national PTA (1986) cited helpful suggestions in its planning guide that could be used by

parents and schools to get parents involved. It also offered activities for parents not involved before. One such activity is for schools to make available a homework hand-out for parents. Another is a flyer designed for parents, listing things they can do at home to help their children learn. Furthermore, schools could conduct a series for PTA meetings called "How to Help Your Child Learn" (p. 39).

Ost (1988) discussed in his forum the needs of teachers in regard to involvement with parents and identified six common fallacies about teacher-parent interaction. One fallacy was that teachers have the skills and techniques to work effectively with parents in the community setting. A second stated teacher-parent interaction was basically the same at all levels of schooling. A third, teacher-parent interaction was the same regardless of the school or community setting. The fourth fallacy mentioned teachers are professionally and personally secure to the point that working with parents posed no threat or intimidation. Another discussed family structures remaining the same throughout the years a child was in school. Finally, teacher-parent

relationships were formed as a result of objective, rational behavior and in isolation of the child's development (p. 165-167).

On the other hand, Becker (1984) described a number of teacher concerns that may serve to impede parent involvement and provided suggestions for helping teachers develop more effective parent involvement skills. First, teachers need to realize they already possess a number of skills necessary for establishing successful programs. Many of the skills needed are characteristic of good teachers. For the majority of teachers, the lack of awareness, priorities, and attention, rather than inabilities hinders the development of successful involvement programs. Once teachers develop a commitment to parent involvement, they can begin to more systematically and specifically use the skills they already possess in achieving optimum and successful involvement.

Secondly, teachers need support for their efforts, particularly when things do not work. One way to help them in this regard is to establish a system of "collegial counseling." Talking with others who are actively working at parent involvement efforts helps to

renew one's energy as well as to solve problems that occur.

Thirdly, teachers need help in developing conflict resolution rather than conflict avoidance strategies. Many teachers express a fear that some conflict with a parent may arise if parents are actively involved. Therefore, to avoid having to deal with the conflict, they avoid parent involvement. Many models of assertiveness training and conflict resolution are available; choosing one program and learning to use it provides the confidence and skills necessary for prevention of avoiding problems by not doing anything.

Fourthly, teachers need help in decentering their perspectives about parent involvement, allowing them to see the process from the parents perspective rather than solely from their own viewpoint. In order to do this, they need to begin talking with and seeking advice from parents regarding the development of involvement strategies, selection of activities, and establishment of appropriate role relationships.

Finally, teachers need to be reminded or helped to select activities for parent involvement in terms of the

goals and purposes of the program, rather than because the activities look interesting or useful. The development of this skill is facilitated, first, by encouraging teachers to think about their goals and purposes when selecting activities and, second, by asking them to solicit specific feedback from parents as the programs progress.

In conclusion, a review of the related literature revealed many aspects of the Black community's role in activities. A school that strives to bridge the gap between home and school with the support of effective parents will not only benefit in areas of school academics but also in areas of the community and society. The writer selected the effective parenting programs to solve the problem of modifying a Black community's perception of its role in school activities. This approach was selected because, based on the research, parents involved with their children in the home promote attitudes and behaviors that improve students' achievements, regardless of social class or other external variables.

CHAPTER III

Methods

Considering that little is known about how members of a Black community view the community's role in activities in today's schools, the writer proposed to determine and study a Black community's perception of the community's role in activities of a public school. The writer observed less than one percent of the 128 Black students at an elementary school participate in extracurricular activities. Also, compared to 99 percent of the 750 White students, based on the results of California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) testing, many of the Black students were considered low-achievers.

According to the school's second quarterly report, there were five extracurricular activities (Student Patrol, student council, math superstar, chorus, and Academic All Stars) offered with an enrollment of less than one percent of the Black students (as noted in Appendix B:47). Therefore, since the problem was examining and studying a Black community's perception of the

community's role and those factors which have most influenced the role, the writer was concerned if the lack of Black students' involvement was an isolated problem. The writer sought information from three neighboring schools concerning the percentage of Black students involved in extracurricular activities (see Appendix C:48). Based on the findings, there should be a higher percentage of the Black students at the writer's school participating in the activities.

The lack of participation carried over into other areas, both academic and nonacademic, as discussed by the guidance counselor; consequently, there was a need to implement additional ways to help Black students develop positive attitudes and self-concepts. Furthermore, Black students needed to feel they were as much a part of the school as other students.

The writer was concerned not only with studying the Black community's parents' perception of the community's role in a public school's activities, but also factors that influenced the lack of involvement. First of all, the lack of involvement could be attributed to the Black students' environment. The area in which the students

lived, according to the local police department, was a high crime area, infested with drug activities and an alarming unemployment rate. The writer felt that the Black students were not exposed to many examples of positive school and community involvement.

Secondly, as pointed out by the tenant counselor of the Housing Authority, 65 percent of the Black students came from single parent families, who may not have the time necessary for active involvement with school extracurricular activities. Lastly, parents may not want to get involved with the school because of limited educational background or past negative experiences. Nevertheless, children are basically more alike than different, and the writer believed that at least 20 percent of the Black students could be involved in the activities offered at the school.

After observing the Black students' lack of participation in school activities, the writer designed a program for the parents of Black students having negative attitudes and low self-concepts, according to the writer's observation and conferring with other teachers. The writer conferred with the principal and/or assistant

principal and asked for background suggestions or any other supportive information to address the problem. The writer also sought information from other schools that did or did not have a similar problem.

The writer sought information from the community college (where all adult education classes are held for the county) to determine funding available. Since the target group area is governed by the Housing Authority, the writer contacted the agency concerning the availability of the community room (cost, days, hours, etc.) and procedures for obtaining it for the program. If the community room had not been available, the writer would have sought out parents in the target area willing to allow the classes to be conducted in their homes. By utilizing the community room and/or home(s), the target group did not have a problem with transportation.

In conferring with the Housing Authority's tenant counselor, the writer was told about 60 percent of the 128 Black Students' parents are illiterate and feel intimidated by anything that requires reading. Also, in past experiences, the counselor stated, the parents have to have a "tangible" reason for participating in group

projects. Therefore, the writer contacted community businesses for donations (coupons, plants, gift certificates, etc.) and provided tangible items as incentives for parental participation. The writer offered refreshments at each session or class.

To address the problem of parents having little or no reading skills, the writer refrained from having any literature that required reading. Furthermore, the advertisement (posters) to register parents was in layman's terms (see Appendix F:53). Also, the pre-registration form (which was given out door-to-door by the writer and/or tenant counselor) was extremely basic (see Appendix G:54). If the parents needed assistance in filling out the pre-registration form, the writer or counselor assisted. The writer asked for Black volunteers (preferably educators) to assist with the program. Also, volunteers from the school's staff were asked to attend an informal meeting with the parents.

The writer set up a 10-week program. The program consisted of effective parenting classes. Each class period was held for at <u>least</u> one hour.

The program schedule on the following page indicates the subject matter and/or objectives of each session or class.

If this plan had not worked, the writer would have surveyed the target area and asked about special needs, interests, and concerns. This would be utilized to try to identify the barriers keeping the parents from getting involved. Also, the writer would schedule sessions or classes on specific topics that addressed identified concerns. For example, if parents were concerned about drug abuse, teen pregnancy, or community problems, these topics would have been included.

Effective Parenting Program Schedule

First Week Opening • Introduction • Surveys and/or Pre-Interviews

Second Week Time Management

Goal: To assist parents by offering techniques in time management to foster a more positive attitude that will be reflected in their children.

Third Week Communicating with Children

Goal: To render effective communication skills to aid in building children's self-esteem, positive attitudes, and encouraging children to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Fourth Week Discipline (Home/School-Assertive/ Saturday School/Suspension/Expulsion)

Goal: To assist parents with specific discipline strategies, emphasizing building self-esteem and responsibility.

Fifth Week Role Playing (Parents bring children) Communication/Discipline/-Time Management

Goal: To assist parents with communication, discipline and time management through role playing. Parents will be able to: (1) serve as role models for their children as they participate in role playing; (2) assess individual strengths and weaknesses; (3) gain mutual support from

each other in techniques which will instill confidence and self-esteem in their children; and (4) encourage their children to participate in extracurricular activities.

Sixth Week

Test Scores • Levels • Progress Reports • Report Cards • Grades • Homework

Goal: To assist parents in interpreting test scores, levels, progress reports, report cards, grades and homework which will promote an increase in the academic progress of the children.

Seventh Week PTA Meetings/ Extracurricular Activities

Goal: To provide information about the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and extracurricular activities, building a support system to get parents involved in PTA and their children involved in extracurricular activities.

Eighth Week Communicating with School Personnel - Role Playing

Goal: To provide essential skills in communicating with school personnel, supporting their children, and strengthening the school/home relationship which should increase the children's academic progress as well as self-concepts.

Ninth Week Meet with School Personnel (Volunteers)

Goal: To offer parents the opportunity to meet with school personnel, bridging the gap between home and school.

Tenth Week Wrap-up • Post-Surveys and/or Interviews

CHAPTER IV

Results

During the first week of the effective parenting program, the target-group's parents were given a pre-survey and interview. The results are shown in Appendix D:50.

During the course of the program, the writer observed and conferred with other teachers to seek information if the following goals rendered a more positive attitude and/or improvement in academics among the target group.

Goal: To assist parents by offering techniques in time management, fostering a more positive attitude to be reflected in their children.

Goal: To provide effective communication skills which would aid in building children's self-esteem, positive attitudes, and encouraging children to participate in extracurricular activities.

Goal: To assist parents with specific discipline strategies, emphasizing building self-esteem and responsibility.

Goal: To assist parents with communication, discipline and time management through role playing. Parents will be able to:

(1) serve as a role model for their children as they participate in role playing;

(2) assess their own strengths and weaknesses;

(3) gain mutual support from each other which will instill confidence and build self-esteem for their children; and

(4) encourage their children to participate in extracurricular activities.

Goal: To assist parents with interpreting test scores, levels, progress reports, report cards, grades and homework, promoting an increase in academics of the children.

Goal: To provide information using PTA meetings and extracurricular activities for a support

system, getting parents involved in PTA meetings, and children involved in extra-curricular activities.

Goal: To develop essential skills in communicating with school personnel, supporting their children, and strengthening the school/home relationship which should increase the children's academic progress as well as self-concepts.

Goal: To offer parents the opportunity to meet with school personnel, bridging the gap between school and home.

During the final week, the target group was given a post-survey and interview to see if the goals had been achieved. The results are shown in Appendix E:52.

Table 1

Data Analysis of Parents' Responses · Pre-Survey

	Parents' Responses	
	Yes	No
Assertive Discipline		22
Saturday School	5	17
Suspension	5	17
Expulsion	5	
District's Tests		22
State Tests		22
Levels	10	12
Report Card	10	12
Grades	10	12
Homework Policy	5	17
PTA Meetings		22
Dividend		22
Volunteer		22
Extracurricular Activities		22

Raw Score · N = 22

Table 1 summarizes the responses of the parents to the pre-survey. All 22 parents did not know what tests were mandated by the district or state, had not attended PTA meetings, served as a Dividend or volunteered at the school. Seventeen out of 22 parents were unaware of what was meant by Saturday School, suspension, expulsion, and the school's homework policy. Twelve of the 22 did not know how to interpret the report card and grades.

Table 2

Data Analysis of Parents' Responses · Pre-Interview

	Parents' Responses		
	Good	Bad	Neutral
Role at school		22	
Treated by staff		20	2
Attitude about school		22	
	Yes	No	No Response
Belongs at school		21	1
Permitted extra. act.		21	1
Child participate extra. act.		22	
Child feels adequate		22	
School values child		22	
School's expectations		22	
	Much	Little	No Response
Input at school		22	

Raw Score · N = 22

Table 2 indicates the responses of the parents to the pre-interview. All 22 parents had negative attitudes about the school and their role with little or no input. Twenty of 22 felt that they are treated badly by the staff. All 22 parents' children do not participate in extracurricular activities, children feel inadequate, school does not value their children, and do not know what the school expects. Twenty-one of 22 feel that their children do not belong at the school and are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities.

Table 3

Data Analysis of Parents' Responses · Post-Survey

	Parents' Responses	
	Yes	No
Assertive Discipline	22	
Saturday School	22	
Suspension	22	
Expulsion	22	
District's Tests	22	
State Tests	22	
Levels	20	2
Report Card	20	2
Grades	20	2
Homework Policy	20	2
PTA Meetings		22
Dividend		22
Volunteer		22
Extracurricular Activities		22

Raw Score · N = 22

Table 3 shows the responses of the parents to the post-survey. All 22 parents are familiar with assertive discipline, Saturday School, suspension, expulsion, and the district and state mandated tests. Twenty of 22 parents can interpret levels, report card, grades and are familiar with the school's homework policy. All 22 parents have not attended any PTA meetings, volunteered, served as a dividend or have children who are in extracurricular activities.

Table 4

Data Analysis of Parents' Responses · Post-Interview

	Parents' Responses		
	Good	Bad	Neutral
Role at school	10	10	2
Treated by staff	10	12	
Attitude about school			
	Yes	No	No Response
Belongs at school	10	5	7
Permitted extra. act.	10	5	7
Child participate extra. act.		22	
Child feels adequate	10	5	7
School values child	10	5	7
School's expectations	12	5	5
	Much	Little	No Response
Input at school	10	5	7

Raw Score · N = 22

Table 4 illustrates the responses of the parents to the post-interviews. Ten of 22 parents felt they have a role at school with much input, are treated well by the staff, and their children belong and feel adequate at the school, and are permitted to participate in extracurricular activities. Fifteen of 22 parents know what the school expects. All 22 parents' children do not participate in extracurricular activities.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

In conferring with other educators, community leaders and parents, the writer has been informed that the problem is not an isolated one. Therefore, the results gained from this practicum could be an exemplary plan for other school programs. The practicum received the attention of Walt Disney World Company. Walt Disney World presented the Teacher Merit Award along with $1,000.00; $500.00 was for the writer's personal use and $500.00 to be used in the program.

The writer plans to continue utilizing strategies that were implemented in the practicum. Also, the writer will extend the plan to concentrate on a specific age group or family situation. Highlights of each course to be developed are listed below:

Effective Parenting of Preschoolers

- Communicating with very young children
- Coping with stress and frustration
- Techniques of discipline

- Building self-esteem
- Childhood growth and development

Effective Parenting of Blended Families (Step-Families)

- Creating effective family roles and relationships
- Dealing with step-sibling rivalry
- Understanding the strengths and pitfalls of step-family living

Effective Parenting of Single Parent Families

- Too little time to parent
- Child and adolescent growth
- Coping with guilt, anger and stress
- Feeling good about yourself as a parent

Each course would help parents develop the essential skills to support their child through the teaching-learning process. Parents would experience a variety of teaching methods. Parents would serve as role models for their children as they participated as both learners and teachers at home. Parents would have the opportunity to assess their own personal goals. Parents would gain mutual support from each other as they strive to better

understand the learning challenges their children face in school.

Timing for the program would be in the fall and spring of each year—during the fall, before the start of school and during the spring, prior to CTBS testing. Other follow-on courses could be held throughout the year as needed.

The results of the program will be shared with the writer's principal, co-workers and other schools. Others would be encouraged to utilize the techniques in their classroom and schools. A copy of the program will be made available for all interested persons. The results will be submitted to the Department of Education, the Superintendent of the County, the Superintendent of Elementary Schools, the Principal of the school and the Guidance Counselor.

Recommendations for Further Research

Although the program was an initial attempt to study a Black community's perception of the community's role in school activities, the program raised several questions which remained unanswered: (1) If transportation is provided for the parents, what percentage would become

more involved? (2) Since the program was held during the spring, what percentage of Black students will enroll in the fall or winter? (3) What percentage of Black teachers are involved in the extracurricular activities? These questions need to be addressed and researched.

Reference List

Becker, Rhonda M. "Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice." Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 247 032), 1984, pp. 14-16.

Berlinder, David and Ursula, Casanova. "Is Parent Involvement Worth the Effort?" The Instructor, October 1985, pp. 20-21.

Bray, R. "The Miseducation of Our Children." Essence, September 1987, pp. 79-83.

Cole, B. "The State of Education for Black Americans." USA Today, May 1983, pp. 70-76.

Henderson, Anne. The Evidence Continues to Grow - Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1987, pp. 1-10.

Henderson, Anne T., Carl L. Marburger, and Theodora Ooms. Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986, pp. 2-32.

Holman, C. "How to Stop the Miseducation of Black Children." Ebony, October 1985, pp. 43-48.

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National PTA. Parent Involvement: What Your PTA Can Do. Chicago, IL, 1986, pp. 1-6.

Ost, David H. "Teacher-parent Interactions: An Effective School-Community Environment." The Educational Forum, Winter 1988, 52, pp. 165-176.

Sleeter, Christine and Carl Grant. "Educators and Parents...Partners in Student Academic Achievement." Multi-Cultural Leaders, Winter 1988, 1, 1-3.

Tulley, Sandra. "Schools for All Children. Recommendations for Including Kentucky's Poor and Minority Children in School Reform." Research Report Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc. 1988.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Analysis of Corporal Punishment and Suspension Data

Corporal Punishment Data
(Total number of instances)

Sex		Race	
Male	45	Black	35
Female	2	White	12

Suspension Data

(Total out-of-school suspensions)

Sex		Race	
Male	29	Black	31
Female	2	White	1

APPENDIX B

Second Quarterly Report

Activities	White Students Participating		Minority Students Participating		Black Students Participating	
Student Patrols	35	99.91%	3	.09%	0	.0%
Chorus	70	99.91%	2	.03%	0	.0%
Student Council	40	99.91%	1	.0%	1	.025%
Academic All Stars	40	99.9%	4	.1%	1	.025%
Math Superstars	178	99.8%	6	.2%	6	.03%

APPENDIX C

Four Schools: Comparing Black Students' Involvement in Activities

	Total No. of Students	No. of Whites	No. of Blacks	Total No. in Activities	No. of Whites	No. of Blacks	Percentage of Whites	Percentage of Blacks
Writer's School	944	815	129	275	267	8	97%	.3%
School A	684	531	153	136	111	25	78%	22%
School B	614	290	324	80	66	14	79%	21%
School C	800	794	6	100	99	1	99%	1%

APPENDIX D

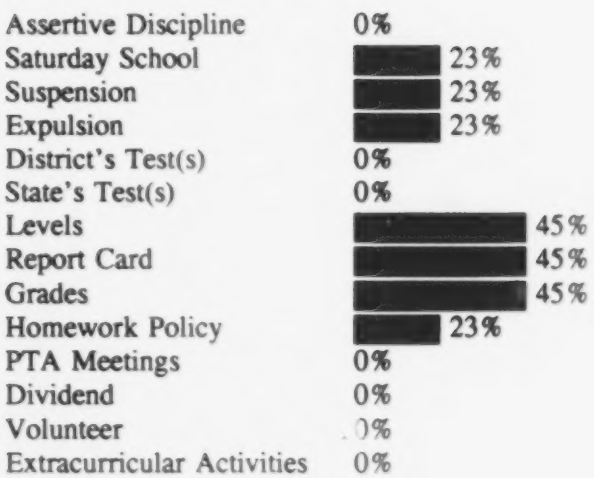
Pre- and Post-Surveys

Question	Yes	No
1. Are you familiar with the school's assertive discipline plan?		
2. Do you know why some students go to school on Saturday?		
3a. Do you know what it means when a child is suspended?		
3b. Do you know what it means when a child is expelled?		
4a. Do you know what tests are mandated by the District?		
4b. Do you know what tests are mandated by the State?		
5a. Do you know how to interpret levels?		
5b. Do you know how to interpret report cards?		
5c. Do you know how to interpret grades?		
6. Are you aware of the school's homework policy?		
7. Have you attended any PTA meetings for 1989-90 school year?		
8. Are you involved as a Dividend at the school?		
9. Have you volunteered to go on field trips/baked goods, etc., at the school?		
10. Do you know what extracurricular activities are offered at the school?		

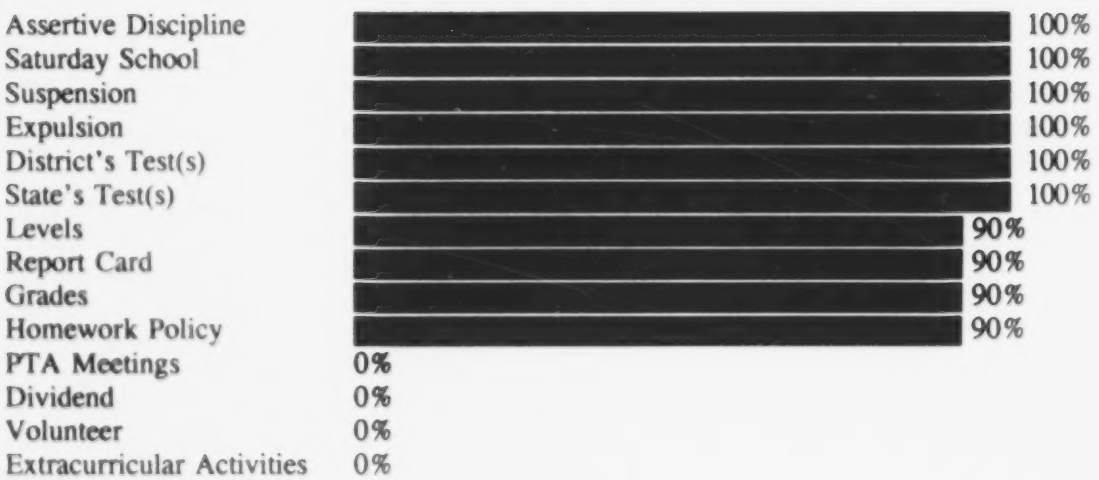
- The results of the surveys (Appendices D and E) are indicated on pages immediately following the survey questions.

Pre- and Post-Surveys (continued)
(Percentage of YES Responses)

Pre-Questions **Percent**



Post Surveys



APPENDIX E

Pre- and Post-Interviews

1. How do you perceive your role at the school?

2. Do you feel that you or your child belongs at the school?

3. How much input do you feel, as a parent, you have at the school?

4. How are you treated by the administrative staff?

5. What is your attitude about the school?

6. Do you feel that your child is permitted to participate in the extracurricular activities offered at the school?

7. Do you feel that your child would like to participate in the extracurricular activities offered at the school?

8. D you feel that the school makes your child feel adequate (good or special enough)?

9. Do you feel that the school values your child?

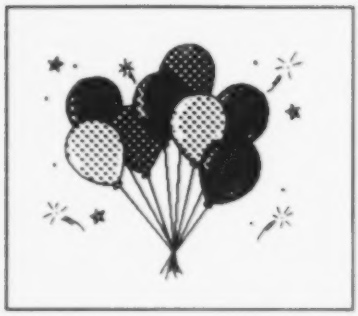
10. Do you know what the school expects from you and your child?

Pre- and Post-Interviews (continued)
(Percentage of GOOD, YES or MUCH Responses)

Pre-Questions	**Percent**
Role at School	0%
Treated by Staff	0%
Attitude about School	0%
Belongs at School	5%
Permitted Extracurricular Activities	5%
Child feels Adequate	0%
School values Child	0%
School's Expectations	0%
Input at School	0%

Post-Questions	
Role at School	45%
Treated by Staff	45%
Attitude about School	45%
Belongs at School	45%
Permitted Extracurricular Activities	0%
Child feels Adequate	45%
School values Child	45%
School's Expectations	55%
Input at School	45%

APPENDIX F



Come and Join in the FUN!

WHAT:	**Learn more about your child's school.**
WHEN:	**Thursdays**
WHERE:	**Community Room**
TIME:	**7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

FREE DOOR PRIZES

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

See Tenant Counselor for more details!

APPENDIX G

TO: ALL RESIDENTS

FROM:

COME AND JOIN IN THE FUN!!

WHAT: Learn More about Your Child's School

WHEN: Thursdays

WHERE: Community Room

TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

ALL THAT YOU NEED ARE: A Listening Ear
and
A Talking Tongue

Note: Free Weekly Door Prizes

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

If you are interested, PLEASE FILL IN AND RETURN TO THE TENANT COUNSELOR.

Name: _____

Apt.: _____ Phone: _____

ATTACHMENTS

Annotated Bibliography

Black Americans Education (Status)

Bray, R. "The Miseducation of Our Children." Essence, September 1987, pp. 79-83.

Bray reveals the status of the education of Black children. A wealth of innovative suggestions for community involvement.

Cole, B. "The State of Education for Black Americans." USA Today, May 1983, pp. 70-76.

Cole found that Blacks are being denied the right to a quality education. Cole advocates Black parents must get involved to curtail the denial.

Holman, C. "How to Stop the Miseducation of Black Children." Ebony, October 1985, pp. 43-48.

Holman tells how and why Black children are being undereducated and miseducated. The article suggests that communities must get involved.

Importance of Parent Involvement

Becker, Rhoda M. "Parent Involvement: A Review of Research and Principles of Successful Practice." Washington D. C.: National Institute of Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 247 032), 1984, pp. 14-16.

Becker describes the major benefits of parent involvement to children, parents, teachers and the community. Provides suggestions for helping teachers develop more effective parent involvement skills.

Berlinder, David and Ursula Casanova. "Is Parent Involvement Worth the Effort?" The Instructor, October 1985, pp. 20-21.

The authors report on the many low-income parents of low achieving students wanting to help their children, but not knowing how. Methods are provided for teachers to use in involving parents.

Henderson, Anne. The Evidence Continues to Grow - Involvement Improves Student Achievement. Columbia, MD, National Committee for Citizen in Education, 1987, pp. 1-10.

Henderson reveals the evidence that indicates the value of parental involvement. The article summarizes and highlights major findings of recent research on the effects of parent involvement on student achievement.

Ost, David H. "Teacher-parent Interactions: An Effective School-Community Environment. The Educational Forum, Winter 1988, 52, pp. 165-176.

Ost recognizes the need of teachers to involve parents. Ost identifies six common fallacies on teacher-parent interactions.

Sleeter, Christine and Carl Grant. "Educators and Parents . . . Partners in Student Academic Achievements." Multi Cultural Leaders, Winter 1988, 1, 1-3.

According to the Sleeters, the attitudes of parents and educators can inhibit parental involvement. The authors show examples of the passive-active involvement of parents.

Tulley, Sandra. "Schools for All Children. Recommendations for Including Kentucky's Poor and Minority Children in School Reform." Research Report Kentucky Youth Advocates, Inc., 1988.

Tulley offers recommendations to include children in school reform. The emphasis is on how the needs of all children can be met by parental involvement.

Strategies to Get Parents Involved

Henderson, Anne T., Carl L. Marburger, and Theodora Ooms. Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents. Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986, pp. 2-32.

The authors list seven basic principles that are essential to an effective parent-school partnership. Many examples from actual schools are included.

"Parents, Your First Partners." The Instructor, Winter 1986, pp. 12-16.

As set forth by The Instructor, there are several researchers closely linking parent participation in school to student achievement. The seven successful strategies in use around the United States are described in depth.

Parent Involvement: What Your PTA Can Do. Chicago, IL: National PTA, 1986, pp. 1-6.

The National PTA provides suggestions used by parents and schools to create effective parent involvement programs. Details specific activities to involve

parents at home, in the school, and in school decision-making.